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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND, a Senator from the State of New York.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

O Mighty God, the giver of grace and mercy, we bless Your holy Name.

Today, empower our lawmakers to walk in Your will and follow Your leading. Give them clean hearts and renew a right spirit within them. Teach them to serve You as You deserve, to give and not to count the cost, to strive and not to heed the wounds, to toil and not to seek for rest, to labor and not to ask for any reward except that of knowing they are doing Your will.

We pray in Your sovereign Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. INOUE).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, November 16, 2011.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND, a Senator from the State of New York, to perform the duties of the Chair.

DANIEL K. INOUE,
President pro tempore.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Following leader remarks, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour. The majority will control the first half and the Republicans the final half. Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 2354, the Energy and Water appropriations bill. We will continue to work on an agreement for the bill and notify Senators when votes are scheduled.

We have a lot of work to do in the next few days. We cannot have the Defense authorization bill eat up a lot of time after we get back from the recess we will have for Thanksgiving. So everyone should understand that we are going to move forward on the Defense authorization bill. It may not be tomorrow, it may not be the next day, but we have to do it before Thanksgiving. So I hope everyone understands. I know everyone wants to get home for Thanksgiving—we all do—but we have an obligation here.

In the Christmas period; that is, after Thanksgiving, we will have just a few weeks to get everything done. As important as the Defense authorization bill is, we can't eat days and days of that time in December. We have to finish that bill now. I know that won't be easy, so I would hope that people understand, if they have an idea that they are going to stop us from moving forward on the bill, on the motion to proceed, we are going to get that done and more. So that might mean we have to work past Thursday, past Friday,

and if we have procedural obstacles on that very important legislation, it will mean we will have to work the weekend and into next week. So I want to make sure everyone understands that. So all Senators who are watching and listening, and especially the staff, just make sure you have alternate reservations to leave Washington.

LIFESAVING REGULATION

Mr. REID. Democrats and Republicans don't agree on much these days, although I had a meeting with some veterans groups earlier today, and I indicated to them that maybe they are going to bring us some good luck because we were able to pass part of the President's jobs bill—the veterans employment—with an overwhelming majority. That was really good news, and I hope that is the beginning of some good days ahead of us.

We do agree Congress must do something about the unemployment crisis we face. We have 14 million Americans out of work. There is no more pressing issue facing Congress or the country than jobs. Our plan, the Democrats' plan to address this problem, has been very straightforward. We have advocated for policies that will create jobs by investing in what makes this country great—our infrastructure, our education system, and our innovative workforce. Despite Republican obstructionism, we have continued to fight for middle-class jobs, bringing to the Senate floor bill after bill designed to bring Americans back to work.

I met yesterday with the Business Roundtable, a stellar organization with the finest business executives we have in America today. I told them that I know they are all doing well financially, and I went over what we had proposed a week or so ago; that is, we need to do something about infrastructure that is deteriorating.

I said we were able to put forward a piece of legislation that said: Let's

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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